

Wildflower Watch

Sequoia National Forest

Kern River Ranger District

The Forest turns into a dazzling garden each spring. Showtime starts in late February when the first wildflowers appear at lower elevations. Displays continue throughout the spring and early summer at higher elevations. Wildflowers grow in many types of habitats - from the dry, hot desert areas to high mountain meadows - so come explore!

The Blossom Trail

Discover the bright gold, purple and reds of a wildflower display. The Greenhorn District comes alive each spring with panoramic vistas and a wildflower bouquet to dazzle your senses. Numerous driving routes feature natural beauty and diversity of the area: Highway 178 through the Kern River Canyon provides a scenic 20 mile tour of steep hillsides alive with poppies, lupines, goldfields and buckeyes. Rancheria road (unpaved) winds 45 miles from Bakersfield to Greenhorn Summit, with a diversity of flowers to see all spring long, including owls clover, fiddleneck, and popcorn flowers. Numerous trails, including Mill Creek and Patch Corner, provide up close viewing of the wildflowers.

Common Wild Flowers

You can find many wildflowers in Kern County; at last count there were over 175 different species of blooming plants found here. Learn to identify flowers by where they grow and how they look. Take along a good wildflower guide to help discover wildflowers on your trip.

Baby Blue Eyes are found on grassy hillsides where their pastel blue petals are pale and speckled near the base. California Poppy, can be found covering hillsides in the Kern Canyon. The four bright orange petals open on sunny, bright days and close on cloudy days. Evening Primrose opens late in the afternoon to attract night insects. The four white petals turn pink in the following days sunlight. Look for them along roadways and slopes. Farewell To Spring blooms on grassy slopes late in the season. The four pink petals

each have a darker spot at the base. Fiddleneck has yellow gold blossoms the curve like a cane. They're among the first flowers out in the spring. Lupines have spires of deep purple flowers. Miners Lettuce has a bright green bowl of leaves that cradle a bouquet of tiny white flowers. The juicy leaves were eaten by early settlers. Monkeyflowers come in a range of color and grow near water. Each flower has crimson spots on the lower petal lip accenting its smiling face. Paintbrush is found in the brushier areas, with red or orange ragged brush like stem tips. Popcorn flowers have white petals with yellow "kernels" on the stamen. Shooting Stars found in pine forests. They look like they're inside-out, shooting downward. Skyrockets resemble red streamers with their bright red trumpet shaped flowers.

Trip Tips

Wildflowers are the jewels of the Forest and like any treasure, they must be protected for all to enjoy. Enjoy, study and get to know them, but leave them to grow and delight the next person. Take only photographs and memories when you leave. Please don't pick the flowers. Tread lightly and stay on trails.

For More Information:

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